Ministry of Environment
and the
Environmental Assessment Office

2015/16 – 2017/18
SERVICE PLAN

February 2015

BRITISH
COLUMBIA

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Minister Accountability Statement

The *Ministry of Environment and the Environmental Assessment Office 2015/16 - 2017/18 Service Plan* was prepared under my direction in accordance with the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*. I am accountable for the basis on which the plan has been prepared.

Honourable Mary Polak
Minister of Environment
February 5, 2015

Purpose of the Ministry

The Ministry of Environment is responsible for the effective protection, management and conservation of B.C.'s water, land, air and living resources. Its expertise in science, research, and analysis are central to supporting all its responsibilities. Ministry legislation, regulation and public outreach activities ensure a healthy environment for British Columbians, sustainable economic development, and clear and predictable regulations for the business community. Key Ministry functions include:

- Administering the province's parks and protected areas;
- Monitoring and enforcing compliance with environmental laws and regulations;
- Leading on climate action;
- Managing discharges to the environment from human activities;
- Using its scientific expertise to inform and lead environmental management in British Columbia; and
- Protecting B.C.'s biodiversity, including ecosystems, native species and natural habitats.

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Strategic Direction and Context

Strategic Direction

All Ministers, as members of the B.C. Executive Council (Provincial Cabinet), are provided letters from the Premier outlining their key responsibilities. The Minister of Environment's mandate letter can be reviewed on the government website.

In addition to responding to the specific direction outlined in the mandate letter, this service plan illustrates the ways in which the Ministry is supporting the Government's *Canada Starts Here: BC Jobs Plan* and the *Province of British Columbia Strategic Plan (2014/15-2017/18)*.

Strategic Context

B.C. is renowned worldwide for its unique and diverse environmental features. Intact predator-prey systems, a vast parks and protected areas network and an array of eco-systems and plant and animal species make up the province. Protecting the environment, along with sustainable economic growth, are top government priorities.

With the responsibility of environmental management comes the opportunity to sustainably develop our natural resources, such as liquefied natural gas, mining and forestry. As we work to realize these opportunities, the Province's commitment to world-leading environmental protection laws will not change, striking the right balance where both the environment and economy can thrive.

To help strike that balance, B.C. remains committed to leadership in the area of greenhouse gas emissions reductions and adapting to climate change. Global climate change has already had economic and environmental consequences for B.C., as seen in the spread of the mountain pine beetle. But it presents opportunities in the areas of green jobs and investments, technology training and advancements.

Proper environmental management can also help prevent damage and costs before they occur. For example, there is an increased threat of the spread of invasive species. The establishment of those invasive species can cause damage to infrastructure and industry, requiring resources to be diverted from other areas. The Province is taking proactive steps to manage the spread of invasive species to protect our native flora and fauna and avoid costs in the future.

And we must look beyond our own borders to accomplish many of our goals; the pressures faced elsewhere can easily become pressures in B.C. That is why the Province will continue to partner with the federal government, neighbouring jurisdictions and international efforts to collectively benefit the environment.

Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Performance Measures

Goal 1: Effective, long-term action on climate change

Objective 1.1: Maintain B.C.'s global leadership on climate change

B.C. is a world leader in efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and prepare for climate change. These efforts are aiding in the growth of B.C.'s green, clean technology economy. Businesses that can operate with as few environmental impacts as possible will be best positioned as the world economy shifts to low carbon alternatives.

Strategies

The Ministry leads these efforts by:

- Coordinating cross-government policy work that supports communities, families, businesses, and local governments to save energy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions;
- Encouraging other jurisdictions to follow B.C.'s leadership in establishing effective policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions;
- Strengthening B.C.'s carbon neutral government performance with an increased emphasis on public sector greenhouse gas emissions reductions and investing in strategic carbon offsets; and
- Supporting competitiveness of B.C. business and industry through continued development of market mechanisms – such as the Carbon Tax – and ongoing work to align regulatory programs across Canada.

Reduction targets for B.C. are among the most ambitious in the world. To assess the success of its efforts, the Ministry reports on provincial greenhouse gas emissions on an annual basis, and reports on progress to targets bi-annually.

Performance Measure 1: Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions

Performance Measure	2007/08 Baseline	2012/13 Actual	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Target
Annual level of greenhouse gas emissions in B.C. relative to 2007 levels	64.3 megatonnes	60.5 megatonnes	18% reduction by 2016 (52.7 megatonnes)[1]	18% reduction by 2016 (52.7 megatonnes)	33% reduction by 2020 (43.0 megatonnes)[1]

Data Source: Ministry of Environment, British Columbia Greenhouse Gas Inventory Report 2012.

[1] Targets shown in this table reflect the targets for 2016 and 2020 set under the *Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets Act*.

Discussion

The Province met the 2012 interim target of a six percent reduction in emissions below 2007 levels. For 2016, the interim target is 18 percent below 2007 levels. Planning toward meeting the targets set for 2020 and 2050 is under way.

Objective 1.2: Effective management of the risks associated with a changing climate

Strategies

The Ministry leads efforts to improve the capacity of decision-makers in government and civil society to manage the risks that climate change poses to B.C. by

- Evaluating the potential financial and human risk from climate change and identifying options to reduce risk to acceptable levels;
- Collaborating with partners throughout B.C. to develop and disseminate effective risk management approaches; and,
- Reviewing, updating and implementing legislation, policies and programs to ensure that B.C. is prepared for and resilient to the impacts of climate change.

Performance Measure 2: Review all core B.C. Government activities to determine if existing objectives can be met in a changing climate

Performance Measure	2012/13 Baseline	2014/15 Forecast	2015/16 Target[1]	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Target
Completion of sector based policy, strategy or operational reviews for climate sensitive business areas.	2	4	5	6	N/A[2]

Data Source: Ministry of Environment, manually compiled

[1] Targets are cumulative.

[2] This performance measure will complete in 2016/17.

Discussion

Government's adaptation strategy recognizes the importance of working with stakeholders in climate sensitive sectors, such as natural resources, health care, agriculture, tourism and transportation, to assess risk and prioritize actions to reduce adverse impacts to the sector from climate change. This performance measure assesses progress towards this commitment by tracking initiatives to review B.C. government policies, strategies and operational activities to ensure they will deliver the desired objectives for their sectors in a changing climate.

Since this measure was introduced in 2012/13, initiatives have focused on agriculture, forests, transportation, mining and coastal flood protection. An assessment of the risks associated with extreme precipitation was completed in 2014. Risk assessments for the oil and gas sector in Northeast B.C. and for electricity demand in a changing climate are under way and will be completed by March 2015. All planned risk assessments are projected to be complete by the end of 2016/17.

Goal 2: Clean and safe water, land and air

Objective 2.1: Enhanced protection and stewardship of water resources

Water is B.C.'s most precious resource. The new *Water Sustainability Act* is replacing legislation that is more than 100 years old. It modernizes B.C.'s water laws, introduces groundwater regulation and strengthens environmental protection. It responds to growing demands for water and a changing climate by establishing rules that ensures B.C.'s supply of clean fresh water is sustainable – to meet the needs today and for generations to come. This important legislation creates certainty for water users regarding rights while responding to the needs of local and regional interests.

Strategies

In recognition of the critical importance of B.C.'s streams, aquatic environments, surface and groundwater resources, the Ministry manages monitoring programs to assess water quality throughout the province. Detailed information on water and other natural resources are reported out regularly through DataBC, the Province's open data web portal.

Objective 2.2: Reduced contamination from toxins and waste

Human activity can lead to environmental contamination from toxins and waste. In those instances where discharges do occur or hazardous materials are used, the Ministry works to minimize impacts to the environment. The Ministry's role is as important as ever; without effective mitigation expected population growth and increased economic activity could increase contamination.

Strategies

Ministry work in this area includes:

- Regulation of liquid waste discharges (sewage and industrial waste);
- Requiring that local governments have solid waste management plans, and promoting recycling, including organics recycling, and general waste prevention; and
- Working with industry to develop and implement mandatory product stewardship programs that require industry to manage the full life cycle of the materials that go into products.

Performance Measure 3: Completion of the *Canada-wide Action Plan for Extended Producer Responsibility*

Performance Measure	2014/15 Forecast	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Target
Percentage of product sub-categories[1] in the *Canada-wide Action Plan for Extended Producer Responsibility* fully covered by industry-led recycling programs in B.C.	79%	84%	95%	100%

Data Source: Ministry of Environment, manually compiled

[1] The action plan places a number of products into different categories. The Ministry divides these categories into sub-categories. For example, one category is packaging, which the Ministry divides into two subcategories: beverage containers; and packaging and printed paper. Some product categories include a large number of products and require multiple industry-led stewardship programs in order to attain complete coverage.

Discussion

In October 2009, the Canadian Council of Ministers of Environment endorsed the Canada-wide Action Plan for Extended Producer Responsibility. Industry-led product stewardship requires producers (manufacturers, distributors and retailers) to be responsible for the life cycle management of their products, including collection and recycling. This places the responsibility for end-of-life product management on the producers and consumers of a product rather than on general taxpayers and local governments. B.C. is committed to the action plan and is the North American leader in developing producer responsibility programs, having more programs and covering more products than any other jurisdiction. The Ministry's Product Stewardship website has the complete list of products with industry-led stewardship programs in B.C.

The target for this measure is to have comprehensive coverage of the products in all subcategories by 2017/18.

Performance Measure 4: Municipal solid waste disposal

Performance Measure	2013/14 Forecast	2014/15 Target	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Target
Per capita municipal solid waste disposal (kg per person)	550[1]	500	500	450	400
Per cent of population covered by an organic waste disposal ban	3.3%	66%	66%	68%	70%

Data Source: Ministry of Environment, manually compiled

[1] Per capita disposal rate data from regional districts is presently being submitted, and the current 2013/14 forecast will be confirmed/revised based on information received.

Discussion

Municipal solid waste comes from residential, commercial, institutional, demolition, land clearing and construction sources. The per capita disposal rate estimates how much waste in a given year each person sends for disposal (i.e. neither reuse nor recycling). Organic waste represents up to 40 per cent of all waste currently sent for disposal.

B.C. is demonstrating leadership in waste reduction, including the diversion of organic materials. The introduction of a clear and consistent system to measure and publicly report per capita waste disposal, along with information sharing and engagement with regional districts, supports this work.

The 2012 provincial municipal solid waste disposal rate was 570 kilograms per person, with very few organic waste disposal bans in place. The long-term targets are a municipal solid waste disposal rate of 350 kilograms per person and 75 per cent of the population covered by an organic waste disposal ban by 2019/20. The January 2015 introduction of organics bans in Metro Vancouver and the Capital Regional District heavily influenced these targets.

Performance Measure 5: Clean technology standards for industry

Performance Measure	2008/09 Baseline	2014/15 Forecast	2015/16 Target[1]	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Target
Number of environmental discharge tools (standards, guidelines or objectives) incorporating current best achievable technology practices	3	9	10	11	12

Data Source: Ministry of Environment, corresponding policy, guideline, code of practice, or regulation

[1] Targets are cumulative.

Discussion

The best achievable technology approach encourages new and expanding sectors to use the cleanest available practices and technologies. This is an important performance measure because it ensures possible sources of pollution are routinely being assessed for new opportunities to reduce environmental impacts. The development of such tools is complex and involves strong partnerships with industry and other experts to design approaches that minimize releases to the environment while ensuring economic viability is maintained.

Objective 2.3: Enhanced protection and stewardship of our air

The Ministry regulates contaminant air emissions from industry, transportation, and urban growth.

Strategies

Ministry work in this are includes:

- Promoting clean technology standards for industrial air emissions;
- Establishing air quality objectives for B.C.'s regions;
- Working with other governments to establish a national air quality management system; and

- Monitoring air quality impacts from the natural resource development, including oil and gas, in the northeast.

Air quality research is another example of how the Ministry promotes sustainable economic development in B.C. The Kitimat and Prince Rupert airshed studies are informing the type of additional development that is possible without stressing the airsheds. These studies are critical to economic growth; they provide a clear understanding of where new industrial facilities can be built while continuing to protect B.C.'s air quality.

Last, by working to encourage the use of clean technologies and supporting the establishment of effective air emissions standards, the Ministry will reduce air pollution in B.C. Like much of the Ministry's work in other areas, its efforts to promote environmental protection also strengthen the economy; in this specific case, by creating the right incentives for B.C.'s clean technology sector to grow.

Objective 2.4: Effective management of environmental risks

The Ministry minimizes environmental risks and mitigates the impacts of environmental emergencies. The first priority is prevention, but when there are incidents of pollution, spills or other environmental accidents, the Ministry of Environment is prepared to act. The Ministry is overseeing all work being undertaken as a result of the August 14, 2014 Mount Polley tailings pond breach to ensure a long-term environmental monitoring program is in place and all appropriate action is being taken to recover from the damage done. The Province is holding the mining company responsible for all costs associated with these activities, including clean-up, remediation and site restoration.

Strategies

Across all business areas, the Ministry anticipates, responds to and manages the consequences of risks to the environment, as well as risks to public safety involving human wildlife conflict. The Ministry develops new policies or regulations to respond to changing conditions (e.g. world-leading spill response policy development). It establishes frameworks to determine where action is most critical (e.g. managing remediation of high-risk contaminated sites). The Ministry continuously assesses its compliance approaches to ensure its enforcement of environmental laws is cutting edge.

The Province has put a significant emphasis on ensuring responsible resource development. As part of this goal, the Ministry is working toward defining world-leading spill response requirements for the province before accepting the transportation of additional heavy-oil through B.C. and along its coast. This is one of the conditions in the Province's *Five Requirements for British Columbia to Consider Support for Heavy Oil Pipelines*. Work is under way developing new provincial policies, collaborating with the federal government in areas under its jurisdiction, and reviewing major heavy-oil pipeline proposals to ensure world-leading prevention and spill response is included.

Sustainable environmental management practices protect the environment while reducing costs through more efficient use of resources and energy. In most cases individuals and businesses are keen participants, and often leaders, in environmental protection because they see savings and recognize it as the right thing to do. There are instances where this is not the case. In those cases, the Ministry actively investigates possible non-compliance with standards and regulations. In addition to charges

and possible penalties, organizations and individuals in non-compliance are publicly reported in the Ministry's *Quarterly Environmental Enforcement Summaries*.

Goal 3: Healthy and diverse native species and ecosystems

Objective 3.1: Well-managed and publicly available information is used to conserve, maintain and enhance native species and ecosystems

The Ministry acquires and manages data and information on species and ecosystems and makes it publicly available through the B.C. Species and Ecosystems Explorer. This data is used to assess the conservation status of plants, animals and ecosystems. Based on this data, priorities are then set for protecting and restoring the environment. Generally, the data is used to support science and policy development across government, land and resource management, and expanding shared environmental knowledge and stewardship in B.C.

Strategies

The Ministry uses its expertise to contribute to environmental stewardship by:

- Facilitating community initiatives to protect and restore native species and ecosystems;
- Implementing research programs that support conservation;
- Developing species at risk programs, strategies and recovery plans (e.g. work on the boreal caribou population and promoting a streamlined federal *Species at Risk Act*);
- Collaborating with partners to prevent the spread of invasive species; and,
- Supporting the government's Cumulative Effects Framework and Environmental Mitigation and Offsetting Policy, which provide opportunities for government and industry to first consider where development is most appropriate, and then reduce the impacts of those developments that do go forward.

Ultimately, environmental stewardship is a shared responsibility for all British Columbians, and the Ministry encourages and supports the critical conservation efforts delivered by the public, local communities and other stakeholders.

The expertise contained within the Ministry is essential to economic development, particularly to the natural resources sector, where industrial activity can have direct impacts on species and ecosystems. By outlining conservation priorities and opportunities for industry to reduce its footprint the government is setting consistent and well defined boundaries for where and which industrial activity can take place. This certainty is the result of the important balance that exists in B.C. between ensuring environmental protection while promoting sustainable economic development.

Objective 3.2: Protect and manage natural values in B.C.'s parks and protected areas while optimizing outdoor recreation and economic opportunities

B.C. has one of the largest parks system in North America and largest provincial/territorial system in Canada, protecting over 14 per cent of the province. BC Parks provides families and visitors with a variety of unique outdoor opportunities in the form of recreation, camping, marine and freshwater angling, hunting and wildlife viewing. Engaging in these activities provides British Columbians with accessible opportunities to appreciate nature while protecting natural assets and supporting local economies.

Strategies

The Ministry collaborates with First Nations and communities in protected area planning and management to protect natural, cultural, and recreational assets. B.C.'s parks are managed using contracted service providers – called Park Facility Operators – to deliver cost effective outdoor opportunities and high quality park experiences for visitors across B.C.

To strengthen its parks and protected area system, the Ministry promotes volunteer, sponsorship, partnership and donation opportunities. It also works closely with partners, communities, and First Nations to optimize stewardship, recreational pursuits, and local economic opportunities.

Performance Measure 6: Park visitation and visitor satisfaction

Performance Measure	2014/15 Forecast	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Target
Number of recorded park visits	20.4 million	21.0 million	21.3 million	21.6 million

Data Source: Ministry of Environment, Parks Attendance and Revenue System

Discussion

B.C.'s park system is the single largest recreation enterprise in the province. The number of recorded park visits is used to measure the contribution of the provincial parks to the government's priorities of healthy communities, tourism and the economy. This performance measure indicates trends in public uptake of outdoor recreation opportunities provided by BC Parks. Targets for 2015/16 and 2016/17 have been adjusted downwards from the *2014/15-2016/17 Ministry of Environment and Environmental Assessment Office Service Plan* to better reflect recent trends in park visitation.

Goal 4: British Columbians share responsibility for the environment and the sustainable use of natural resources

Objective 4.1: British Columbians are engaged in environmental stewardship initiatives and are provided with the information they need to make sound environmental choices

Shared stewardship counts on British Columbians continuing to make meaningful changes in their lives to minimize environmental impacts. It requires partnerships with First Nations, industry, communities, environmental groups and other governments because the need to make positive changes exists in all areas of our lives, not only in those aspects in which the Ministry directly operates.

Strategies

The Ministry works with communities to deliver Bear Smart, a program that is a clear example of shared environmental responsibility. It works with stewardship organizations to promote outdoor activities that foster a connection to the natural environment. And it also helps British Columbians make smart choices for the environment by providing timely, easily accessible online information and scientific data on the state of the environment, including @LiveSmartBCca, @EnvReportBC, Environmental Reporting BC, BCAirQuality.ca and LivingWaterSmart.ca.

Objective 4.2: Sustainable use of British Columbia's environmental resources

The Province is committed to the sustainable development of natural resource industries, including mining, oil, and natural gas development.

Strategies

The Ministry seeks to ensure all British Columbians will continue to benefit from the wise and prudent management of natural resources, which are crucial to the health and sustainability of our environment. In addition to the work outlined above, the Ministry operates hydrometric and air monitoring networks to obtain information to support water and airshed management, and it interprets and shares enviromental science and information with the public. This work is critical because it provides British Columbians and the natural resource sector with ongoing data that can be used to help interpret the state of the province's environmental health.

The Ministry also supports communities engaged in multi-stakeholder air and water management, fosters collaborative approaches to sustainable natural resource management, and protects the province's natural resources from damaging and fraudulent activities.

Resource Summary

Ministry of Environment	2014/15 Restated Estimates[1]	2015/16 Estimates	2016/17 Plan	2017/18 Plan
Operating Expenses ($000)				
Environmental Protection	8,785	8,356	8,105	8,361
Environmental Sustainability[2]	19,047	20,143	20,511	20,482
BC Parks	30,968	31,089	30,838	31,019
Conservation Officer Service	15,120	15,221	15,290	15,444
Climate Action[3]	3,273	19,307	17,529	15,779
Executive and Support Services	24,050	24,006	24,036	24,103
Sub-Total	101,243	118,122	116,309	115,188
Park Enhancement Fund special account	1,800	1,800	1,800	1,800
Sustainable Environment Fund	18,935	18,935	18,935	18,935
Total	**121,978**	**138,857[4]**	**137,044[4]**	**135,923[4]**
Ministry Capital Expenditures ($000)				
Executive and Support Services[5]	18,633	20,438	20,438	20,438
Park Enhancement Fund special account	400	400	400	400
Total	**19,033**	**20,838**	**20,838**	**20,838**

Other Financing Transactions ($000)				
Climate Action				
Disbursements[6]	10,000	13,000	13,000	10,000
Receipts	0	0	0	0
Total Net Cash Requirements (Source)	**10,000**	**13,000**	**13,000**	**10,000**

Notes:

[1] For comparative purposes, amounts shown for 2014/15 have been restated to be consistent with the presentation of the *2015/16 Estimates*.

[2] In comparison with the Fiscal 2014/15 Service Plan, Environment Sustainability increased operating expenses $996K, $1,296K, and $1,115K for Fiscal Years 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18 respectfully due to the implementation of *the Water Sustainability Act*.

[3] Climate Action increased by $7M annually commencing Fiscal 2015/16 for carbon offset purchase costs under the ministry's new procurement program and $9M, $7.2M and $5.4M for Fiscal Years 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18 respectfully for funding initiatives related to industry program development.

[4] As a result of Economic Resource Stability there is net increase to operating expenses of $570K, $950K and $1,810K for Fiscal Years 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18 respectfully. This further provided the need to realign the subvotes accordingly.

[5] Executive and Support Services increased by $1.81M commencing Fiscal 2015/16 for vehicle replacement.

[6] In comparison with Fiscal 2014/15 Service Plan, the Disbursements to purchase Greenhouse Gas Emission offset for inventory, increases by $3M for Fiscal 2015/16 and 2016/17 for contractual obligations.

Further information on program funding and vote recoveries is available in the Estimates and Supplement to the Estimates.

Environmental Assessment Office

Purpose of the Office

The Environmental Assessment Office ensures proposed major projects meet provincial environmental, economic and social objectives. The process evaluates proposed projects that are reviewable under the *Environmental Assessment Act* for potential adverse environmental, economic, social, heritage and health effects. If a project is approved by Ministers, the Environmental Assessment Office verifies and enforces compliance with the conditions set out in environmental assessment certificates.

The Environmental Assessment Office continues to identify innovations that ensure timelines are appropriate for both economic development and environmental protection objectives, while contributing to the BC Jobs Plan, controlling spending and balancing the budget.

In addition, the Minister of Environment's June 10, 2014 mandate letter called on the Minister to participate in the Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion environmental review with the National Energy Board. Any heavy oil pipeline project must satisfy B.C's five conditions before the Province will consider supporting it. The Province has intervenor status to participate at the hearings by submitting and reviewing evidence on the proposed project.

The Environmental Assessment Process

Proposed projects are reviewable if they meet or exceed thresholds defined in the *Reviewable Projects Regulation*.[1]

The Minister of Environment can also designate any project that has not been substantially started as reviewable if the Minister believes the project may have a significant adverse effect. In addition, proponents may request their project be accepted for review.[2]

Once the Environmental Assessment Office determines that the application is complete, the Office must review the application within 180 days. The Environmental Assessment Office prepares an assessment report for the Minister of Environment and the Minister responsible for the project, which identifies the potential effects associated with the project and evaluates the extent to which any adverse effects would be avoided or mitigated. If the ministers issue a certificate, proponents are legally required to adhere to conditions of the certificate.

After a project is certified, the certificate holder must ensure it is in compliance with the conditions of the certificate throughout the life of the project. The Environmental Assessment Office works with other government agencies to coordinate compliance oversight through inspections, reviewing the certificate holder's compliance self-reports, responding to complaints and other efforts.

The Environmental Assessment Office builds meaningful engagement with First Nations throughout environmental assessments by identifying measures to accommodate the interests of First Nations in relation to potential effects on established or asserted Aboriginal rights and on treaty rights.

[1] For example, if a proposed coal mine is projected to produce ≥ 250,000 tonnes of coal per year, it would be automatically reviewable.

[2] A proponent may request (or "opt-in") that the Environmental Assessment Office consider designating its project (that otherwise would not be reviewable) as a reviewable project.

Strategic Context

Environmental Assessment Activity

The demand for environmental assessment of proposed projects in B.C. remains strong. Under the *BC Jobs Plan* and the Liquefied Natural Gas Strategy, the number of proposed projects in B.C. continues to increase. Of the projects currently under review, approximately 45 percent are mining, 33 percent are energy/power, and 14 percent are LNG projects. In total, the potential capital investment for all 73 projects currently in the environmental assessment process is over $115 billion.

Federal-Provincial Cooperation

Often major projects in B.C. require both federal and provincial environmental assessments. When this occurs, the Environmental Assessment Office and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency work closely together to design a review process that maximizes efficiency while meeting the requirements of both governments. The Environmental Assessment Office and Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency work together by either entering into a substitution agreement to allow the provincial process to be substituted for the federal process or coordinating the two reviews of a proposed project. As of the beginning of 2015, the federal government has approved the substitution of 12 environmental assessments to the Province.

Goals, and Performance Measures

Goal 1: Conducting timely and efficient Environmental Assessments

Objective 1.1: Build upon a strong legislative framework

B.C.'s *Environmental Assessment Act* has been in place since 1994. The *Environmental Assessment Act* was subsequently amended in 2001 to allow for more flexible and responsive procedures. The Environmental Assessment Office works with potentially affected parties and the public to ensure potentially adverse effects are identified and avoided or mitigated so if the project proceeds, it will do so in a sustainable manner.

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- Appropriately scoping project reviews and instituting a project management discipline in environmental assessments to adhere to the legislated 180-day application review period;
- Collaborating with other provincial agencies to improve service to clients and reducing overlap and duplication with other federal and provincial regulators;
- Identifying policy and practice options to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the environmental assessment review process; and
- Modernizing business management systems, including the introduction of proponent self-service.

Performance Measure 1: Application reviews in the B.C. environmental assessment process are completed within 180-days

Performance Measure	2014/15 Forecast	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Target
Percentage of application reviews completed within 180-days:				
B.C. process only	100%	100%	100%	100%
Joint B.C./Canada process	100%	100%	100%	100%

Data Source: Environmental Assessment Office, manually compiled

Discussion

The legislated timelines in the *Environmental Assessment Act* include a 180-day limit for the review of applications for environmental assessment certificates. This timeline offers certainty in understanding the duration of steps in environmental assessment and supports timely planning for the public, government, First Nations, proponents and other potentially affected parties.

Objective 1.2: Ensure the effectiveness of environmental assessments

Continuously improving effectiveness and efficiency is key to maintaining the integrity of B.C.'s environmental assessment process.

Strategies

A key strategy for this objective is through a quality assurance program that ensures continuous improvement of the environmental assessment process, and a compliance management program to ensure projects comply with certificate conditions and commitments.

Performance Measure 2: Compliance inspections completed on certified projects

Performance Measure	2014/15 Forecast[1]	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Target
Number of compliance inspections completed on certified projects	23	23	25	27

Data Source: Environmental Assessment Office, manually compiled

[1] The 2014/15 target was 21 inspections. As of November 2014, the target was exceeded with a total of 23 field inspections. Additional inspections may be conducted in 2014/15 if required to address compliance concerns.

Discussion

Compliance staff within the Environmental Assessment Office work closely with other agencies to ensure effective coordination of compliance oversight of environmental assessment conditions and permitting requirements. Environmental Assessment Office Compliance and Enforcement undertakes various compliance oversight activities, including but not limited to field inspections, administrative inspections, review of complaints, investigations and compliance promotion. Inspections are a key component of this work through which Compliance Officers promote compliance and enforce legally binding environmental assessment certificate conditions. The Environmental Assessment Office's project staff rely upon information gained through inspections when developing conditions for newly proposed projects to ensure continuous improvement of environmental assessment certificates.

Resource Summary

Environmental Assessment Office	2014/15 Restated[1] Estimates	2015/16 Estimates	2016/17 Plan	2017/18 Plan
Operating Expenses ($000)				
Environmental Assessment Office	11,570[2]	11,610[3]	11,630	11,690

Notes:

[1] For comparative purposes, amounts shown for 2014/15 have been restated to be consistent with the presentation of the *2015/16 Estimates*.

[2] The $144,000 decrease in the Environmental Assessment Office to due to a funding transfer to Ministry of Technology, Innovation and Citizens' Services to centralize building occupancy budgets.

[3] Funding for the Economic Stability Mandate provided a budget increase of $40,000, $60,000, and $120,000 in 2015/16 to 2017/18.

Further information on program funding and vote recoveries is available in the Estimates and Supplement to the Estimates.

Appendix

Ministry of Environment Contact Information

Headquarters
Victoria
Telephone: 250 387-5429
Fax: 250 387-6003
Website: www.gov.bc.ca/env/
Additional contact information can be found at www.gov.bc.ca/env/contacts.html.

Regional Offices

Coast Region

West Coast

Nanaimo Office:
Telephone: 250 751-3100
Fax: 250 751-3103
Website: www.env.gov.bc.ca/van-island/
Other offices: Black Creek, Duncan, Goldstream Park, Queen Charlotte City, Parksville, Port Alberni, Port Hardy, Ucluelet

South Coast

Surrey Office:
Telephone: 604 582-5200
Fax: 604 930-7119
Website: www.env.gov.bc.ca/lower-mainland/
Other offices: Brackendale (Squamish), Cultus Lake, Maple Ridge, North Vancouver, Sechelt, Powell River

Southern Interior Region

Cariboo/Thompson

Kamloops Office:
Telephone: 250 371-6200
Fax: 250 828-4000
Website: www.env.gov.bc.ca/thompson/

Williams Lake Office:
Telephone: 250 398-4530
Fax: 250 398-4214
Website: www.env.gov.bc.ca/cariboo/
Other offices: Clearwater, Lillooet, Merritt, Kelowna, Oliver, Princeton, Vernon, 100 Mile House, Quesnel

Kootenay/Okanagan

Nelson Office:
Telephone: 250 354-6333
Fax: 250 354-6332
Website: www.env.gov.bc.ca/kootenay/
Other offices: Castlegar, Creston/West Creston, Fernie, Grand Forks, Invermere, Golden, Revelstoke

Penticton Office:
Telephone: 250 490-8200
Fax: 250 490-2231
Website: www.env.gov.bc.ca/okanagan/

Cranbrook Office:
Telephone: 250 489-8540
Fax: 250 489-8506

Northern Region

Skeena

Smithers Office:
Telephone: 250 847-7260
Fax: 250 847-7591
Website: www.env.gov.bc.ca/skeena/
Other offices: Atlin, Burns Lake, Dease Lake, Terrace/Lakelse Lake

Omineca

Environmental Protection Division
Conservation Officer Service
Prince George Office:
Telephone: 250 565-6135
Fax: 250 565-6629

Environmental Sustainability
Parks and Protected Areas Division
Prince George Office:
Telephone: 250 565-6135
Fax: 250 565-6940

Website: www.env.gov.bc.ca/omineca/
Other offices: Vanderhoof, Mackenzie, Mount Robson, Fort St. James

Peace

Fort St. John Office:
Telephone: 250 787-3411
Fax: 250 787-3490

Water Stewardship Divison:
Phone: 250 565-6135
Fax: 250 565-6629

Website: www.env.gov.bc.ca/peace/
Other offices: Chetwynd/Moberly Lake Park, Dawson Creek, Fort Nelson/Liard Hotsprings

Report all Poachers and Polluters

Telephone: Dial Toll-Free 1-877-952-7277
Website: http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/cos/rapp/form.htm

Environmental Assessment Office Contact Information

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